Industrial Control

Student Guide

Version 1.0

Note regarding the accuracy of this text:
Many efforts were taken to ensure the accuracy of this text and the experiments, but the potential for errors still exists. If you find errors or any subject requiring additional clarification, please report this to stampsinclass@parallaxinc.com so we can continue to improve the quality of our documentation.

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Table of Contents

Preface iii
Preface iii
Audience and Teacher's Guides iv
Copyright and Reproduction iv

Experiment #1: Flowcharting and Stamp Plot Lite 5
Adjusting the Temperature for a Shower Example 6
Conveyor Counting Example 7
Exercise #1: Flowchart Design 11
Exercise #2: LED Blinking Circuit 11
Exercise #3: Analog Data 14
Exercise #4: Using Stamp Plot Lite 17
Questions and Challenge 21

Experiment #2: Digital Input Signal Conditioning 23
Exercise #1: Switch Basics 28
Exercise #2: Switch Boune and Debouncing Routines 33
Exercise #3: Edge Triggering 36
Exercise #4: An Electronic Switch 43
Exercise #5: Tachometer Input 48
Questions and Challenge 56

Experiment #3: Digital Output Signal Conditioning 63
Exercise #1: Sequential Control 66
Exercise #2: Current Boosting the BASIC Stamp 80
Questions and Challenge 84

Experiment #4: Continuous Process Control 90
Exercise #1: Closed Loop On-Off Control 91
Exercise #2: Open-Loop vs. Closed-Loop Control 106
Questions and Challenge 117

Experiment #5: Closed-Loop Control 118
Exercise #1: Establishing Closed-Loop Control 121
Exercise #2: Differential-Gap Control 127
Questions and Challenge 133

Experiment #6: Proportional Integral Derivative Control 136
Exercise #1: Proportional Band 138
Exercise #2: Proportional Integral Control 154
Exercise #3: Derivative Control 159
Questions and Challenge 164

Appendix A: Stamp Plot Lite 166
Appendix B: Encoder Printouts 176
Appendix C: Potter Brumfield SSR Datasheet 178
Appendix D: National Semiconductor LM34 Datasheet 182
Appendix E: National Semiconductor LM34 Datasheet 188
Appendix F: Parts Listing and Sources 194

Preface

Industrial process control is a fascinating and challenging area of electronics technology and nothing has revolutionized this area like the microcontroller. The microcontroller has added a level of intelligence to the evaluation of data and a level of sophistication in the response to process disturbances. Microcontrollers are embedded as the "brains" in both manufacturing equipment and consumer electronic devices.

Process control involves applying technology to an operation that alters raw materials into a desired product. Virtually everything that you use or consume has undergone some type of automatic process control in its production. Automatic process control also provides higher productivity and better product consistency while reducing production costs.

This text is intended to introduce you to the concepts and characteristics of microcontroller-based process control. The hardware needed in the experiments to simulate the process has been kept to a bare minimum. While the microcontroller is the "brains" of the process, it is not the "muscle." Actual applications require the microcontroller to read and control a wide variety of input and output (I/O) devices. Information included in the experiments will help you understand the electrical interfacing of "real world" I/O devices to the BASIC Stamp.

The physical nature of the elements in a system determines the most appropriate mode of control action. The dynamics of a process include a study of the relationship of input disturbances and output action on the measured variables. It is difficult to understand the dynamics of a process without being able to "see" this relationship. For the authors, this defined a need to develop a graphical interface for the BASIC Stamp; hence the creation and release of StampPlot Lite. This software allows digital and analog values to be plotted on graphs, and time-stamped data and messages to be stored. StampPlot Lite is used throughout the experiments, and is especially helpful as you investigate the various modes of process control. Typical screen shots from program runs are included.

The authors of this material are Martin Hebel and Will Devenport. We are instructors at Southern Illinois University in Carbondale and co-owners of the consulting company, SelmaWare Solutions. We invite your comments and feedback. Contact us at www.selmaware.com, and copy all error changes to Parallax at stampsinclass@parallaxinc.com so the text may be revised.

We would like to thank our editors Ms. Cheri Barrall and Dale Kretzer, and of course Ken Gracey and Russ Miller of the Parallax staff for their review and improvement of this text.

Audience and Teacher's Guide

This text is aimed at an audience ages 17 and older. Effective during the first publication of this text in June, 2000, there is no Teacher's Guide edition planned. If a Teacher's Guide were to be published, it would likely be available the first part of year 2001. Solving these experiments presents no difficult technical hurdles, and can be done with a bit of patience.

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Experiment #1: Flowcharting and StampPlot Lite

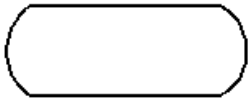
A flowchart is a detailed graphic representation illustrating the nature and sequencing of an operation on a step-by-step basis. A flowchart may be made of an everyday task such as driving to the store. How many steps are involved in this simple task? How many decisions are made in getting to the store? A formalized operation such as baking cookies can be flowcharted, whether on a small-scale process in your kitchen or on a very large scale in a commercial bakery. And, of course, a flowchart also may be made of the steps and decisions necessary for a computer or microcontroller to carry out a task.

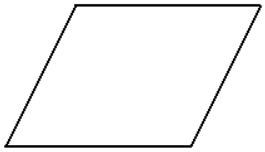
A relatively simple process is usually easy to understand and flows logically from start to finish. In the case of baking cookies, the steps involved are fairly easy. A recipe typically requires mixing the required ingredients, forming the cookies and properly baking them. There are several decisions to make: Are the ingredients mixed enough? Is the oven pre-heated? Have the cookies baked for the recommended time?

As processes become more complex, however, it is equally more difficult to chart the order of events needed to reach a successful conclusion. A BASIC Stamp program may have several dozen steps and possibly a number of **`if - then`** branches. It can be difficult to grasp the flow of the program simply by reading the code.

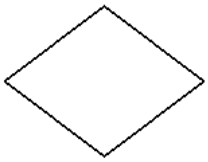
A flowchart is made up of a series of unique graphic symbols representing actions, functions, and equipment used to bring about a desired result. Table 1.1 summarizes the symbols and their uses.

Table 1.1: Flowchart Symbols

	Start/Stop box indicates the beginning and end of a program or process.
	Process box indicates a step that needs to be accomplished.

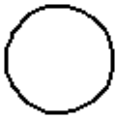


Input/Output box indicates the process requires an input or provides an output.

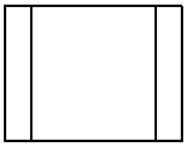


Decision box indicates the process has a choice of taking different directions based on a condition. Typically, it is in the form of a yes-no question.

Flowline is used to show direction of flow between symbols.



Connector box is used to show a connection between points of a single flowchart, or different flowcharts.



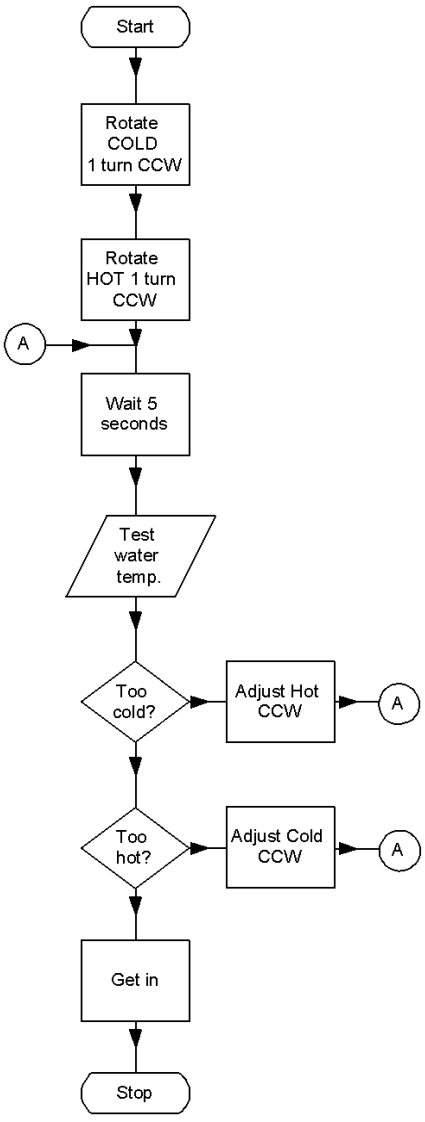
Sub-routine or sub-process box indicates the use of a defined routine or process.

Example #1: Adjusting the Temperature of a Shower

Let's take an example flowchart of an everyday task: adjusting the temperature for a shower. The process of adjusting the water temperature has several steps involved. The water valves are initially opened, we wait a while for the temperature to stabilize, test it, and make some decisions for adjustments accordingly. If the water temperature is too cold, the hot valve is opened more and we go back to test it again. If the water is too hot, the cold valve is opened more. Once we make this adjustment, we go back to the point where we wait for a few seconds before testing again. Of course this doesn't take into account whether the valves are fully opened. Steps may be inserted during the temperature adjustment procedure to correct for this condition. Figure 1.2 shows a flowchart of this process.

This example demonstrates a process that may be used in adjusting the temperature, but could it also be the steps in a microcontroller program? Sure! The valves may be adjusted by servos, and the water temperature determined with a sensor. In most cases, a simple process we go through can be quite complex for a microcontroller. Take the example of turning a corner in a car. Can you list all the various inputs we process in making the turn?

Figure 1.1:
Shower Temperature Example

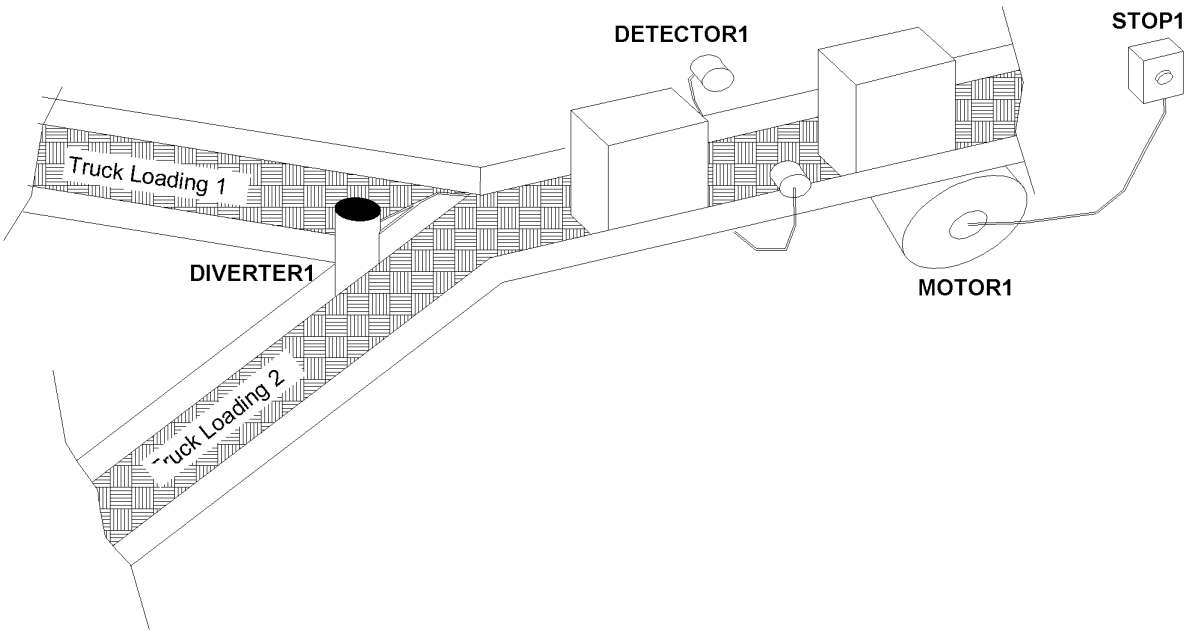


Example #2: Conveyor Counting Example

Let's look at a real scenario and develop a flowchart for it. In a manufacturing plant, items are boxed and sent down a conveyor belt to one of two loading bays with trucks waiting. Each truck can hold 100 boxes. As the boxes arrive, workers place them on the first truck. After that truck is full, the boxes must be diverted to the second truck so the loaded truck can be moved out and an empty one moved into position. Also, in the event of an emergency or problem, there must be a means of stopping the conveyor.

The physical aspects of the scenario are illustrated in Figure 1.2. The motor for the belt is labeled MOTOR1. The sensor to detect the boxes as they pass is labeled DETECTOR1. The lever to direct boxes to one truck conveyor or the other is labeled DIVERTER1. The emergency stop button is labeled STOP1.

Figure 1.2: Conveyor Counting Example



Let's list in order a brief description of what must occur:

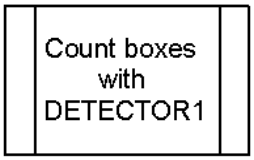
- Start the conveyor motor.
- Count the boxes as they pass.
- When 100 boxes have passed, switch the diverter to the opposite position.
- Whenever the emergency stop is pressed, stop the conveyor.

Now that we know the basic steps involved, let's develop a flowchart for the process. Let's begin by looking at the simple process flow in Figure 1.3.

Notice the placement of the Input/Output box for checking the emergency stop button, STOP1. It ensures the button is tested during every cycle. What if we had placed it following the 100-count decision box? How long would it have taken from when the button was pushed until the conveyor stopped?

Does the flowchart describe everything our program needs to do? Definitely not, but it is a good start at determining the overall flow of the process. Look at the "Count Boxes with DETECTOR1" Process box. How exactly is this carried out? We may need to develop a flowchart to describe just this routine. If a process needs further detailing, we might replace the Process box with a Sub-Process box as shown in Figure 1.4.

Figure 1.4: Sub-Process Box



How involved is it to simply count a box passing by a detector? If DETECTOR1 is activated by "going low," do we count? When the detector stays low, how do we keep from recounting it again the next time our program passes that point? What if the box bounces on the conveyor as it enters our beam? How do we keep from performing multiple counts of the box? These answers may not be as simple as they seem. Even when performing a task as simple as counting a passing box, many variables must be taken into account.

Another consideration is the output of our detector. Can we directly measure the output using one of the BASIC Stamp inputs, or is there some circuitry needed to condition the signal first?

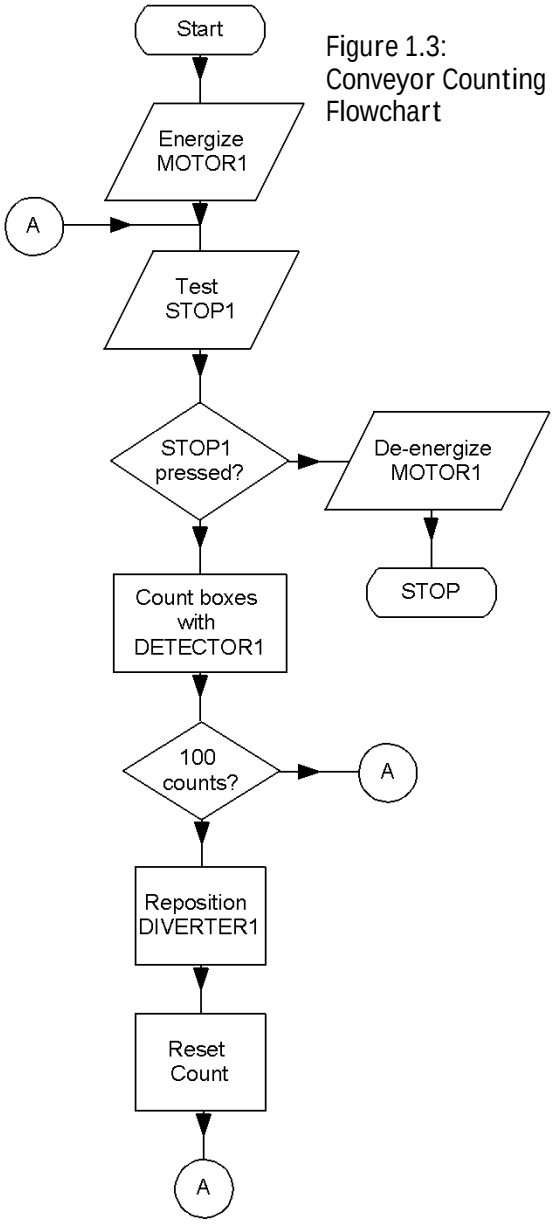


Figure 1.3: Conveyor Counting Flowchart

Let's consider an output in our conveyor counting example. How do we energize the motor? It is doubtful the 5-volt, milliamp-rated output of the BASIC Stamp will be able to drive a motor of sufficient horsepower to move a conveyor! How do we condition an output of the BASIC Stamp to control a higher voltage and current load?

These issues will be considered as you work through the chapters in this text. What may seem simple for us to do as humans may require some sophisticated algorithms for a microcontroller to mimic. We will use readily available electronic components, a BASIC Stamp module, and the Board of Education to simulate some complex industrial control processes.

Exercises

Exercise #1: Flowchart Design

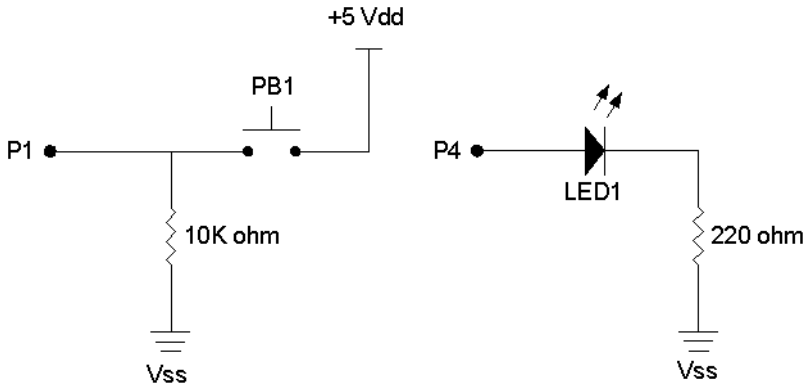
Draw a flowchart that will energize a heater below 100 degrees and de-energize it above 120 degrees.

Exercise #2: LED Blinking Circuit

We'll use a simple circuit to demonstrate a flowchart process and the program to perform the task. You'll need to build the circuit shown in Figure 1.5. The following parts will be required for this experiment:

(1) LED, green
(2) 220-ohm resistors
(1) 10K-ohm resistor
(1) Pushbutton
(1) 10K-ohm multi-turn potentiometer
(1) 1 uF capacitor
(miscellaneous) jumper wires

Figure 1.5: Exercise #2 Blinking Circuit Schematic

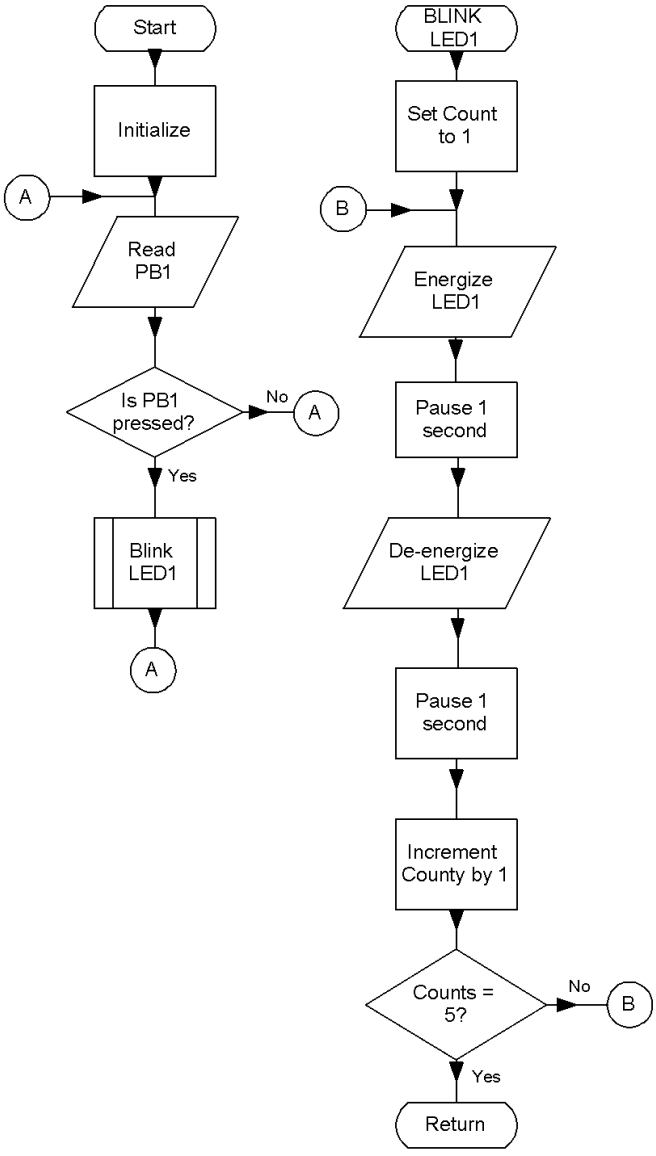


The circuit you are building consists of a single input button and a single output LED. Here is the process we want to perform: when the button (PB1) is pressed, blink the green LED (LED1) five times over 10 seconds. The flowchart for our process is shown in Figure 1.6.

Notice a few things about the flowchart. Our main loop is fairly simple. In the Initialize process box, we will define any variables needed and set initial outputs (LED off) and will loop unless PB1 is pressed, which calls our subroutine, **`blink_led1`**. Our subroutine doesn't begin with "Start," but the name of the process, so that we can identify it. The flowchart describes a process that we will repeat five times, alternately energizing and de-energizing our LED for one second each time.

Now that we have a flowchart to describe the process, how do we program it in PBASIC? Programmatically, we can sense PB1 using the **`in`** statement. We have two ways we can call our subroutine. If the condition is true (1), then we can branch to our subroutine directly using an **`if-then`** statement. This would be treated as a PBASIC **`goto`**. Once this completes, we would need to **`goto`** back to our main loop. Or, if the condition is false (0), we can branch back to our main loop from the **`if-then`**, and use a **`gosub`** command to branch to our subroutine when true. We can then use a **`return`** when our subroutine is complete.

Figure 1.6: Exercise #2 Blinking Circuit Flowchart



In our **blink_led1** subroutine, we need a loop to repeat five times. Choices for accomplishing this task may be to set up a variable we increment and check during each repetition, or use the **for-next** statement to accomplish it for us.

The flowchart describes the general steps involved in accomplishing a process. The code required is flexible as long as it faithfully completes the process as described. The same flowchart may be used in multiple languages or systems and even for humans!

Program 1.1 is one way to write the code for our blinking LED process. Enter the text in the BASIC Stamp editor, download it to the BASIC Stamp, and press the pushbutton of the circuit you built. If it works properly, the LED will blink five times after the pushbutton is pressed.

```
'Program 1.1, Blinking LED Example
cnt    var    byte          'A variable for counting
pb1    con    1             'PB1 is on P1
led1   con    4             'LED1 is on P4

input pb1                   'Setup PB as input
output led1                 'Setup LED as output

low led1                    'Turn OFF LED

loop:
  if in1 = 0 then loop      'Not pressed? Go back to start
  gosub blink_led1          'If it was pressed, then perform subroutine
goto loop                   'After return, go back to start

blink_led1:                 'Subroutine to blink LED
  for cnt = 1 to 5          'Set up loop for 5 repetitions
  high led1                 'Turn on LED
  pause 1000                'Wait 1 second
  low led1                  'Turn off LED
  pause 1000                'Wait 1 second
next                        'Repeat loop until done

return                      'Return to after the gosub in Loop
```

Programming Challenge

Flowchart and program a process where the LED will blink four times a second while the pushbutton is NOT pressed!

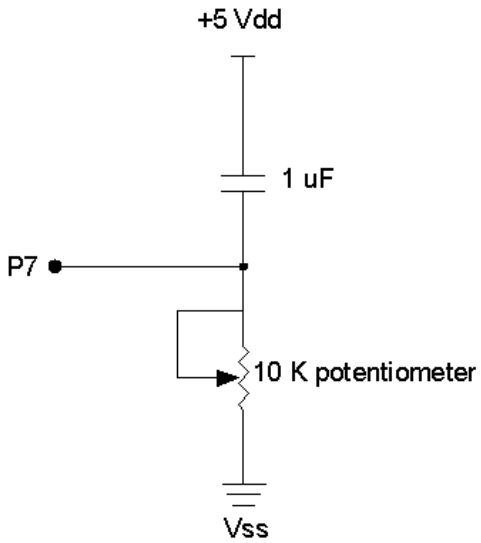
Exercise #3: Analog Data

In many instances a process involves analyzing and responding to analog data. Digital data is simply on or off (1 or 0). This is comparable to the simple light switches in our homes. The light is on or it is off. Analog data on the other hand is a range of values. Some examples include the level of lighting if we use a dimmer switch instead of an on/off switch, or the temperature of the water coming out of our shower nozzle.

There are several methods to bring analog data into a microcontroller, such as using an analog-to-digital (A/D) converter that changes analog values into digital values that may be processed by the microcontroller. Another method used by the BASIC Stamp is a resistor/capacitor network to measure the discharge or charge time of the capacitor. By varying the amount of the resistance, we can affect and measure the time it takes the capacitor to discharge. In this experiment, resistance is set by manually adjusting a variable resistor. But the device may be more sophisticated, such as a photo-resistive cell that changes resistance depending on the amount of light shining on it, or a temperature sensor. More discussion on analog data is found in later sections, but for now let's perform a simple process-control experiment using an analog value.

Add the RC network shown in Figure 1.7 to your circuit from the previous experiment.

Figure 1.7: Schematic for Analog Data circuit added to Exercise #3



PBASIC Command Quick Reference: RCTime

```
RCTIME pin, state, resultvariable
```

- `Pin` is the I/O pin connected to the RC network.
- `State` is the input voltage of that pin.
- `Resultvariable` is normally a word-length variable containing the results of the command.

.

The PBASIC command we will use to read the analog value of the potentiometer is **`rctime`**. A typical block of code to read the potentiometer is as follow:

```
high 7
pause 10
rctime 7, 1, pot
```

In order for it to read the potentiometer, the routine needs to take the following steps:

- +5 V (HIGH) is applied to both sides of the capacitor to discharge it.
- The BASIC Stamp pauses long enough to ensure the capacitor is fully discharged.
- When **`rctime`** is executed, Pin 7 becomes input. Pin 7 will initially read a high (1) because an uncharged capacitor acts as short.
- As the capacitor charges through the resistor, the voltage at Pin 7 will fall.
- When the voltage at Pin 7 reaches 1.4 V (falling), the input state is read as low (0), stopping the process and storing a value in **`pot`** proportional to the time required for the capacitor to charge.

The greater the resistance the longer the time required for a capacitor to discharge; therefore, the higher the value of **`pot`**. In this manner, we can acquire an analog value from a simple input device.

Let's write a process-control program to make use of this input. Our process will be one where temperature is monitored and a heater energizes below 100 degrees and de-energized above 120 degrees. The potentiometer will represent a temperature sensor and the LED will represent the heater being energized. We will use the debug window to display our temperature and the status of the heater. The maximum potentiometer value, with this combination of resistor and capacitor, may reach 5000, so we will divide it by 30 to scale it to a more reasonable range.

Enter and run Program 1.2. Monitor the value in debug window while adjusting the potentiometer and note what occurs as the value rises above 120 and below 100.

```
'Program 1.2, Simple Heater
led1   con    4                  'LED1 is on P4
rc     con    7                  'RC network is on Pin 7
pot    var    word               'Pot is a variable to hold results

output led1                      'Setup LED as output

goto HeaterON                    'Initially turn the heater on

loop:
  high rc                        'Read Potentiometer
  pause 10
  rctime rc, 1, pot
  pot = pot/30                   'Scale the results down
  debug "temp = ",dec pot, cr
  if (pot < 100) and (out4 = 0) then HeaterON
                                 'If temp < 100, and the output is
                                 'Off then turn it on.
  if (pot > 120) and (out4 = 1) then HeaterOFF
                                 'If temp => 120, and the output is
                                 'On then turn it off.
  pause 100
goto loop

HeaterON:                        'Energize and display
  high led1
  debug "The heater energized",cr
goto loop

HeaterOFF:                       'De-energize and display
  low led1
  debug "The heater de-energized", CR
goto loop
```

Programming Challenge

Modify the process so the LED indicates an air conditioner cycling between 70 and 75 degrees.

Exercise #4: Using StampPlot Lite

While the debug window for the BASIC Stamp is very useful for obtaining data and information from the BASIC Stamp, it can be difficult to visualize the information without careful scrutiny. Is the temperature increasing or decreasing? How quickly is it changing? At what point did the output change? What temperature is it cycling around? If you have not yet installed StampPlot Lite, install it on your computer by downloading it from http://www.stampsinclass.com. Double-click the setup button and install it in your designated directory.

Review Appendix A for an overview of StampPlot Lite. StampPlot Lite intercepts signals sent by the BASIC Stamp to the debug window.

Let's take another look at Program 1.2, our simple heater, but this time using StampPlot Lite to help visualize the process. Program 1.2 has been rewritten as Program 1.3 to utilize StampPlot Lite.

```
'Program 1-3, Simple Heater with plotting
'Configure StampPlot
pause 500
debug "!SPAN 50,150",CR                 'Set span for 50-150
debug "!TMAX 60",CR                     'Set for 60 seconds
debug "!PNTS 500",CR                    '500 data points per plot
debug "!TITL Simple Heater Control",CR  'Title the form
debug "!PLOT ON",CR                     'Enable plotting
debug "!RSET",CR                        'Reset Plot

led1   con    4                        'LED1 is on P4
rc     con    7                        'RC network is on Pin 7
pot    var    word                     'Pot is a variable to hold results

output led1                             'Setup LED as output

goto HeaterON                           'Initially turn the heater on

loop:
  high rc                               'Read Potentiometer
  pause 10
  rctime rc, 1, pot
  pot = pot/30                          'Scale the results down
  debug dec pot,cr,ibin1 out4,cr
  if (pot < 100) and (out4 = 0) then HeaterON
                                        'If temp < 100, and the output is Off
                                        'then turn it on.
  if (Pot > 120) and (out4 = 1) then HeaterOFF
       'If temp > 120, and the output is On
```

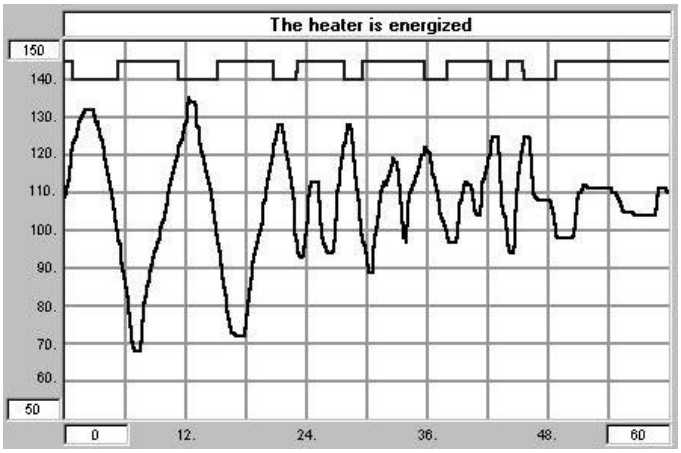
```
                                        'then turn it off.
  pause 100
goto loop

HeaterON:                               'Energize and display
  high led1
  debug "!USRS The heater is energized",cr
goto loop

HeaterOFF:                              'De-energize and display
  low led1
  debug "!USRS The heater is de-energized", cr
goto loop
```

Download this program to your BASIC Stamp, and follow these instructions to use StampPlot Lite.

Start StampPlot Lite by going to Start/Programs/StampPlot/StampPlot Lite. Enter and run Program 1.3 on your BASIC Stamp. Close the BASIC Stamp editor's blue debug window. Select the correct COM port in StampPlot Lite and click 'Connect.' Reset the BASIC Stamp by pushing the button on the Board of Education. Now you're ready to use this unique software utility.

At this point you should see data being plotted. Adjust the 10K-ohm potentiometer with your fingers or a small screwdriver. The analog line displays the value of the potentiometer. The digital trace at the top displays the status of the LED indicator. Figure 1.8 is a sample capture of the plot from our circuit.

Figure 1.8: StampPlot Lite Graph of Exercise #4



Note the correlation between the analog value and the switching of the digital output. Use the various controls on StampPlot Lite to become familiar with the functions and features. Analyze Program 1.3 and note the various configuration settings and data sent to the application. Refer to Appendix A for additional information on StampPlot Lite if you are having problems understanding the basics of the software utility.

Programming Challenge

Modify your air conditioner challenge from Exercise #2 to use StampPlot Lite. Configure your program to transmit data approximately every 0.5 seconds. Calculate the number of data points needed to fill the screen within a maximum of 60 seconds, and test.

Just for fun!

Enter and run the following program. The potentiometer simulates a single-handle shower (mixer) valve with adjustment delay. Adjust the shower temperature for a constant 110 degrees. See how fast you can stabilize the temperature at the set point! Press the reset button on the Board of Education and try again. We'll leave it up to you to figure out the program.

```
'Program 1-4, Adjust the shower!
settemp var byte
curtemp var byte
Diff var byte
Pot var word
Settemp = 110

Pause 500
debug "!RSET",CR,"!SPAN 0,200",CR,"!TMAX 30",CR,"!PLOT ON",CR
debug "!TSMP ON",CR,"!MAXS",CR,"!PNTS 100",13

Start:
debug "!USRS Adjust the pot for ",DEC Settemp,CR

Loop:
  high 7
  pause 10
  rctime 7, 3,pot
  pot = pot/ 30

  IF pot > curtemp then higher
  IF pot < curtemp then lower

goto display

higher:
  diff = pot - curtemp/5
  curtemp = curtemp + diff
goto display

lower:
  diff = curtemp - pot/5
  curtemp = curtemp - diff

display:
  debug dec curtemp,cr
  if curtemp <> settemp then skipbeep
  debug "At Setpoint!",CR,"!BELL",CR

SkipBeep:
  pause 250
goto loop
```

Questions and Challenge

1. List one everyday human process that involves a decision. List the steps in performing the process and the decisions needed to be made.

2. Develop a simple flowchart for the process in Question #1.

3. List an example of an electronics process in your home or school (such as that of an electric or microwave oven control, alarm clock, etc). Develop a simple flowchart to describe the process.

4. Develop the flowchart and code for the following process: The potentiometer simulates a temperature sensor. If the temperature exceeds 100 degrees, lock on the alarm (LED). Do not clear the alarm until the pushbutton is pressed.

5. Modify the program from Question #4 to use StampPlot Lite to display the temperature, alarm bit and status of the alarm.